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SUBJECT: DEMARCHE ON MAURITANIA

¶1. (U) This is an urgent action request. Please see paragraph 3.

BACKGROUND

¶2. (SBU) On January 28, President Abdoulaye Wade sent a special envoy from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Mankeur Ndiaye to deliver a message to Mauritanian Mohamed Ould Abdel Aziz. According to media reports, the message emphasized the friendship and brotherhood between the two countries. The week prior, President Wade met with General Aziz in Qatar and began what reports have called "dialogue" between Mauritania and Senegal.

¶3. (SBU) Post is instructed to meet with Foreign Minister Gadio and special envoy Mankeur Ndiaye as soon as possible to request clarification regarding recent meetings between Senegalese officials and Mauritania junta leaders. Post should also make clear USG position on Mauritania.

Please refer to the following talking points.
(BEGIN POINTS)

-- We remain firm in our condemnation of the undemocratic and unconstitutional measures taken by Mauritania's security and military leaders in launching the August 6 coup d'etat against the legitimate and democratically elected president of Mauritania.

-- We do not accept the coup for reasons both of principle and practicality: Not only do coups violate the democratic principles we all share, but also experience shows that coups simply beget further coups--and inspire them elsewhere. We are also convinced that this coup will not bring greater security and stability to Mauritania but rather risks sparking divisive conflict and courting economic ruin.

--The U.S. strongly supports the firm and principled position of the AU and the international community in rejecting the coup in Mauritania.

--In defiance of the international community, the junta is embarked on a course that will lead the country even farther down an unconstitutional path by taking steps to conduct illegitimate elections that can only further complicate a return to legitimacy and constitutional order.

--We must reject this cynical attempt by the junta to give itself a democratic veneer. We, therefore, urge Senegal to fully support the AU position including any measures adopted to dissuade the junta from its unwise and illegitimate actions.

--Senegal's reputation as a leading democracy gives its actions towards undemocratic events increased importance and scrutiny among its neighbors and within the international community. We hope that Senegal will use its influence to help Mauritania return to constitutional order beginning with the re-instatement of President Abdallahi to his presidential powers.

CLINTON